

Public Required to Identify Themselves if Charged with Breaching an Emergency Order During the COVID-19 Outbreak

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TORONTO — People who are being charged with an offence under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act (EMCPA) will be required to identify themselves if asked by a provincial offences officer, which includes police officers, First Nations constables, special constables and municipal by-law enforcement officers. This temporary power was approved by the Ontario government today through an emergency order to better protect people during this COVID-19 outbreak.

"It is essential that measures are in place to allow provincial offences officers to lawfully require an individual to disclose their correct name, date of birth and address in order to protect our communities," said Sylvia Jones, Solicitor General. "By providing provincial offences officers with this temporary power to obtain identifying information under the EMCPA, they will be able to enforce emergency orders during these extraordinary times."

Emergency orders currently in place to address the COVID-19 outbreak include the closure of non-essential businesses, prohibiting organized public events and social gatherings of more than five people and stopping price gouging on necessary goods such as disinfectant products. Failing to comply with any of these emergency orders is an offence under the EMCPA and so is the failure to identify oneself accurately.

Failing to correctly identify oneself carries a fine of \$750 for failure to comply with an order made under the EMCPA or \$1,000 for obstructing any person in exercising a power if a provincial offences officer issues a ticket. In addition, failure to comply with an emergency order could carry punishments of up to one-year imprisonment or a fine of up to \$100,000 for an individual, \$500,000 for a director of a corporation, or \$10,000,000 for a corporation itself if a provincial offences officer charges the individual by issuing a summons.

These penalties apply in addition to the penalties for breaching other emergency orders.

"It is the responsibility of all Ontarians to do their part and respect the emergency orders in place. We are supporting provincial offences officer in their critical work to enforce that responsibility and ensure the safety and well-being of Ontarians," added Solicitor General Jones.